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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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It's been another one of those hectic weeks. Usually, things go awry at work to cause all kinds of stress. But this week, it was more crazy due to things around the house. The work on our sunrooms finally started, but hit a short snag. We were told the work would begin first thin Monday morning, and likely be finished within the week. So my wife took Monday and Tuesday off to be here; and I was off the rest of the week. Monday, the crew arrived [late] and took down the remainder of our back porch, parts of our existing deck, and put the floors in while reenforcing the bases. They didn't show on Tuesday! I made a couple of nasty calls Tuesday night complaining about the lack of communication and the broken promises. I got a call very early Wednesday morning apologizing for the confusion, and that work would resume that same day. It did. Thursday, the rooms were completed, although we had to postpone the electrician's work because it didn't appear that the rooms would be ready for him on Thursday. The rooms look great! Now we have to finish off the interior of them (flooring, blinds, and furnishings). I guess this means that I have to start getting ready for some more work inside the house now that the major project has been completed!

For those of you who have been keeping tabs of the anti-telemarketer ruling, it appears that the do-not-call edict is back on track again! Yea! My phones will finally get some much-needed rest!

Not much else going on lately, so I'll start my weekend a little earlier for a change. Maybe I'll even enjoy a nice cool drink out in the new enclosed room, and not have to worry about getting eaten by any few-remaining bugs! And, I'll be watching my Chicago Cubs battle their way into the World Series, taking on the Boston Red Sox - and winning!! Go Cubbies!

Until next time...

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MyMAIL 1.62 Released

Hi all !

New version of MyMail (1.62) released.

I have cause of the large amount of spam put down a big
work on the spam filter this time and added a function
for automatic sending of spam reports.

The plan was to include more in this release
but my free time for coding mymail is limited
so I decided to do the release now to help
all of you having problems with spam-mail.

Major improvements & bug fixes:

- Spam filter bug fixed and now includes
  a auto-reporting system.
- Editor now works on texts up to 64K
- Queue sending with dialer/modem was not working. Fixed now.
  (read more in the history.txt file)

Download from:

http://erikhall.atari.org/programs/mymail.html
- or -
http://212.214.15.116/~erikhall/programs/mymail.html

MyMail mailinglist

You can add or remove yourself from MyMAIL mailinglist.
The add/remove page is found at:
http://www2.tripnet.se/~erikhall/mymailupdates.html

Best Regards
Erik Hall

2003 MiniGame Competition Voting Underway

The votepack for the 2003 MiniGame Competition is now available, allowing you to vote for your favorite games. This year's competition pits authors of 4K and 1K games against one another to see who can write the best games in a minimal amount of space. The contest features several Atari 2600 and Atari 800 games, with submissions from several homebrew authors you may be familiar with. Head on over to the 2003 MiniGame Competition page to vote for your favorite games--the deadline for voting is Sunday, October 26th!

http://www.ffd2.com/minigame/

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I've still got a bit of that flu bug I had last week, but all in all I feel much better than I did the last time we met up.

It's strange, but have you noticed that each time there's a mutation to one of these flu bugs that it seems to take longer and longer to get rid of it? I'm not one of those conspiracy theorists that find deep, dark plots behind everything, but let's be honest... just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean that everyone's NOT out to get you. <grin>

My concern is not that some scientist in some lab in a far-away place is tinkering with a virus, but that Mother Nature herself is speeding things up in some way or another for some reason known only to her and Father Time. For every new treatment that medical science comes up with there are now two new "wee beasties" out there.

I don't mean to be an alarmist, and I don't intend to leave the impression that I think we're all doomed, but it does warrant some thought.

Well, while I'm popping the last of my antibiotics and cough surpressant, let's take a look at the news and stuff from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Mark Duckworth talks about overclocking his Falcon:

"I've been trying to overclock my falcon mobo to 20MHz but with problems. I updated my CT60 hardware with JTAG and replaced ST-ram card with atari 1mb. This solves most problems however there is still present a problem where in 20MHz mode, the keyboard and mouse are garbage (mouse moves as keypresses), keyboard presses as wrong keys! In 16Mhz it works fine so it can't be my wiring/soldering right? Any suggestions? Should I redo my solder joint to that ACIA? Also note, none of my problems with my falcon appear to be caused by my (crappy) ST-ram card...

Aha! The problem was a mistake on my part which I am quite embarrassed about. All is apparently well at 20MHz now. Now for 100MHz and 25MHz bus."

'Rustynutt' tells Mark:

"All right, share your mistakes as well as fortunes. That's how everybody learns."

Mark replies:

"Well I cut and soldered to pins 4 and 5 instead of 3 and 4. I must admit, sometimes I am a bit dyslexic at times. I do feel like a fool though. Such a simple job and my mistake could have fried my falcon. At least the

rest of the job was done properly!"

While we're talking about hacking about in the guts of our machines, Greg Goodwin sends out an SOS for his CT60 project:

"My CT60 conversion is not going well, and I don't know whether to blame the motherboard, the power supply, the RAM, or my somehow blowing up something with static.

Here's what I'm up against, with a CT60 plugged in...

1) The floppy light stays on constantly. This started about an hour before I even put in the CT60, but after I had put in the power supply. This makes me a bit suspicious of the power supply.

2) HDDriver 8.13 cannot autoboot or correctly partition my drives. It doesn't generate any error messages, but when the desktop comes up, the "C" icon does nothing (not even an error message) and installing drives "D" and "E" gives the standard 'no drive there' error. Actually, one attempt to partition using HDDriver completely corrupted both my hard drives, causing a lockup at boot or when running from floppy. I have recovered one drive with ICD utilities (the drive now works fine if I partition and boot via ICD in 16 Mhz 68030 mode) and think I know how to get the second one working, but HDDriver is becoming a very frustrating $65 purchase.

3) The CT60 mode has substantial instabilities. On rare occasions I get 2-4 bombs even before the boot sequence finishes or when I change resolution. More often, I get 5-20 minutes of use (it's a bit hard to test when you're still running off of floppy), but the darn thing isn't stable. Recently I've even had a few crashes with 16 Mhz 68030 mode.

Considering Rodolphe's attention to detail, I'd be very surprised if the problem were the CT60 board itself. But where should I look to solve these problems?"

Carey Cristenson asks/tells Greg:

"Are you sure that everything is installed correctly??? Double check all hardware connections and installation procedure. Apparently the TRACE is cut or you probably would not even be able to bootup. Are you using SCSI hard drives to try and bootup your system??? If so, I have had serious problems with SCSI stuff trying to copy files to that hard drive!!! Try and find a very fast IDE notebook hard drive or buy and adapter to switch it from notebook hard drive connector to regular desktop hard drives. Performance gain using IDE is very impressive!!! It is about double in MB/sec versus SCSI. Have you sorted your auto folder??? XBOOT also gives serious problems and will cause illegal format errors while booting into CT60 mode. I had SERIOUS system crashes after only 5 to 20 minutes of use also with the CT60. I was getting SPURIOUS INTERRUPTS left and right. The 2 things I did were sorted the AUTO FOLDER and changed the OSCILLATOR from 66.666 mhz to 72 mhz. and all is

WELL!!!!! Matter of fact I have been running my FALCON 060 for 17 to 18 hours today alone straight without ANY rebooting!!!! The only other thing I can suggest would be your power supply or RAM is your SDRAM CL=2 and/or PC133??? PC100 seems to give more problems because PC100 most of the time is CL=3 and this gives instability problems on the CT60. Let us know if you get anywhere with it. Happy to help if you need it.

I currently have about a 2 foot cable on my IDE chain for 2 IDE hard drives listed at the bottom of this page in my SIG. Obviously, the shorter the better. It could be possible that booting anything from the floppy with the CT60 may give problems especially if you do not have the latest updates. What updates are you using??? I am using ABE5K and SDR5D just for future reference for you. The 72 mhz. oscillator came with my CT60!!! Did you not get one as well??? It is my understanding that if there was a problem with the DIMM that the CT60 would not even boot properly. Not sure about this because I have not experienced this problem. I received an e-mail from Rodolphe a few days ago saying that if your DIMM is a PC133 but a CL=3 that it is most likely to not give any problems. Mine just so happens to be a KINGSTON 512 meg SDRam PC133 part # KVR133X64C3/512 where the C3 indicates that it is a CL=3 but on my system it has always booted up and given NO problems. Anyone else out there also using PC133 but a CL=3 latency and not having any problems??? If so, what kinda problems??? But to answer your question I believe that Rodolphe had something put into the bootup that if there was problems with the DIMM that it would let you know. If there is anything else I can do for you let me know."

Chris Wilkinson asks for help with an emula... ummm, a virtual Atari:

"I’m running Aranym 0.8.0-pre3 on my Linux machine. I am trying to enable Aranym to read files to/from my Linux filesystems, but Betados reports ’c:\auto\aranymfs.dos, BAD file error.’ when I boot the emulator. I have a TOS 4.04 ROM image, and a disk image of my Falcon030 1.2GB IDE disk...

Does anyone have an idea how I can fix this? I’m not sure what causes it and I’m just following instructions provided with the emulator... "

Stranda Opichal tells Chris:

"I’m not sure where you got the c:\auto\aranymfs.dos filename, but we are using the hostfs.dos at this time for about a year already. There is probably no aranyfs.dos file any more. Please, download the afros disk image and try that. It has all the necessary driver binaries. Please use the hostfs.dos one. "

Chris replies:

"I tried that one now, but both give me the same "BAD file error."
when Betados boots.

I launch aranym with 'aranym -dm:/home/chrisw/ATARI/'
In '$HOME/.aranym/config' file there is [HOSTFS] section
which I also edit to show M: as mapped to /home/chrisw/ATARI/
Is that the correct way to do this?"

Stranda tells Chris:

"The -d command line option is an alternative to the .aranym/config line.
You don't need to use both of them.

Put the following line into the bdconfig.sys
*DOS, c:\auto\hostfs.dos, M:M

It should be all and working when you enable the BetaDOS.PRG in your
C:\AUTO

In case of further problems send the bdconfig.sys snippet and the C:\AUTO
folder listing to the aranym-user mailing list. There we can help you more
while not bothering others here."

Edward Baiz posts this about my all-time favorite Atari developer:

"After I wrote my STe article for MyAtari, I decided it was time to
have my STe multi-task. So I installed Geneva and ordered a copy
of NeoDesk 4 from Gribnif. I was not sure if they were still
around, but sure enough that are as well as Dan Wilga. He was very
helpful and sent me my copy pronto. Works just great too.. In case
no one realizes, I have Geneva installed on my Hades and it works
great along with the EASE desktop. For some reason though, EASE
does not like my STe when ran with Geneva, so I ordered Neodesk.
It is nice to see some Atari software companies still around these
days..."

Greg Goodwin chimes in:

"Dan is around, but he hasn't really done anything since 1999. Still,
I use Geneva and NeoDesk on my Falcon (and previously on my STe) and I'm
impressed with how well it works. If you have 4Mb or less of memory,
it's a very good choice for an OS."

Dan himself pops in and posts:

"I also still read c.s.as .from time to time <grin>

Thanks for the mention."

John Garone asks:

"Can someone give info on jumpers to change on a PC floppy to be used on
a Falcon (I seem to have lost the info). Also, I have a PC floppy but
there's no markings as to where those jumpers are at."

Adam Klobukowski tells John:

"The jumpers may be inside, and you may need soldering iron to resolder them (as I had to do)."

David Leaver asks about HD Driver:

"I have a TT running MagiC 6.20 with HD Driver 8.03.

A couple of months ago I converted a 3.2gb Quantum Fireball drive on the SCSI bus to FAT32 partitions. The internal drive and a Syquest EZ230 still use BGM partitions. Everything on the SCSI bus seems to work normally, except that MagXDesk takes a few seconds to assemble a FAT32 partition for display on the first time I open it in a session.

On the ASCI bus I have a SupraDrive FD10 which I seldom use, so it was only a day or two ago that I noticed the following behaviour. The FD10 uses an Hitachi drive and has its own, venerable SCSI adapter.

At any time during a read or write to the FD10, disk operations can freeze. The TT has not crashed. Any program already running is accessible, but no disk operation is possible. The freeze will last a predictable amount on time, a few seconds less than two minutes, after which the read or write resumes as if nothing had happened. Nothing appears to be wrong with the completed read or write.

In a test copy of a folder containing 25 files files I experienced four of these freezes. Initiation of a freeze seems to be random, but the duration is constant, as if some long value is counting down from -1 to zero. Freezes can occur during a desk-top copy or during a read or write by an application.

I have background DMA enabled, but switching it off makes no difference.

If a freeze occurs during a copy by MagXDesk and I bring up the MagiC task list (Alt-Cont-Esc) something appears strange. The byte-count for MGCopy looks like a random number and the entry for MGcopy is followed by a second line with no task-name but the same byte-count. I have no idea if this is related or means anything.

Does anybody know anything about this?"

Dr. Uwe Seimet, author of HD Driver, tells David:

"Did you switch the Fast ACSI option on? This does not work with some drives (also refer to the manual) and may result in the problems you have observed. Try to switch it off. Besides note that the ACSI bus of many TTs is not working properly. But with these TTs you usually get a loss of data with fast drives connected to the ACSI bus. In your case it seems to be something different."

Well folks, that’s it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - New PSX Entertainment System!
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" 'Half-Life II" Game Code Theft!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Sony Puts $719 Tag on PSX Game/Entertainment System

Sony Corp said on Tuesday it would launch the "PSX" - an entertainment system boasting a satellite TV tuner and DVD recorder plus its PlayStation 2 game player - in Japan later this year at a minimum price of 79,800 yen ($719).

It hopes the all-in-one entertainment system, which also has a hard disk drive (HDD) recorder, will boost its electronics division, whose aging product line-up and high costs were a big factor behind a net loss of almost $1 billion in the January-March quarter.

"There is the game industry and game development and we are trying to fuse the consumer electronics business with games to make a new growth area," Sony Chief Executive Nobuyuki Idei told Reuters at a technology industry show in Makuhari, near Tokyo.

The fusion of games and mainstream electronics products took another step forward on Tuesday when Nokia, the world's leading mobile phone maker, launched its new combined cellphone and game machine, N-Gage.

Sony is scheduled to enter the portable game machine market next year with its PSP device, which will also play music and movies.

The PlayStation 2 (PS2) and Microsoft's Xbox console already come with a built-in DVD player, but Sony aims to justify the hefty price by including a top-of-the-line HDD recorder.

A version with a 160-gigabyte HDD will sell for 79,800 yen and be able to record up to 204 hours of television, the company said. It will also sell a 250-gigabyte version for 99,800 yen. There is no timetable for an overseas PSX launch, Sony said.

"The price was in line with our expectations and it is likely to have a solid appeal for buyers of DVD recorders," said Masahiro Ono, a senior

analyst at Credit Suisse First Boston.

As a comparison, Sony will also start selling a DVD recorder with a 160-gigabyte HDD in November at a retail price of around 100,000 yen. Rival Pioneer Corp plans to begin offering a similar DVD recorder the same month for around 140,000 yen.

"PSX's price sounds very cheap," a Pioneer spokeswoman said. "But we have to look closely at the PSX as it may lack some of the functions on our product. We can't compare the two just because their HDDs are the same size."

Tadanobu Kawano, a 26-year-old game fan in Wakayama prefecture, said: "It sounds cheap, especially since it's Sony's. But whether I will buy it or not may depend on the design."

Kawano already has Sony's PlayStation and PlayStation2 as well as Nintendo Co Ltd's GameCube console and Microsoft Corp Xbox.

Credit Suisse First Boston's Ono estimated the cost of making a 160-gigabyte PSX at 70,000 yen, excluding promotion and marketing. The price would bring Sony "some profits," he said.

Since the PSX does not offer any different game features from the PS2, some customers said they would prefer to wait for a new PlayStation model.

"I can't see much use in paying this much for the PSX when PS3 is coming," said Koji Nishikawa, a 36-year old graphic designer at the industry show.

Sony has not offered any clues on when a new game machine, which many presume will be a "PlayStation 3," will make its debut.

Sony plans to invest 500 billion yen over the next three years in semiconductors, including research and development for a high-powered microprocessor codenamed "cell" that is being developed with Toshiba Corp and IBM.

Analysts expect the chip to power Sony's next-generation game console, but the company aims to make "cell" the global standard for consumer electronics in the high-speed Internet era.

The company's games division has developed cutting-edge semiconductors for the PS2 and the original PlayStation, but it is the upcoming PlayStation machine that has people excited about the integration of electronics and games.

Sony has invested 300 billion yen since 1999 on microchips for the PS2 and its game division head Ken Kutaragi has said it plans to recoup its initial investments in the game machine's "emotion engine" and graphic chip this year.

Vivendi's 'Half Life II' Game Delayed by Code Theft

The theft of part of its source code has delayed until April 2004 the launch of "Half Life II," the hotly anticipated alien-hunting game of Vivendi Universal Games, a company official said.

"A third of the source code was stolen. It’s serious because it forces us to delay the launch of the game by at least four months, that is to April 2004. Just the time to rewrite parts of the game," VU Games president of international operations Christophe Ramboz told daily Les Echos in its Tuesday edition.

According to Les Echos, a hacker broke into the email of the game’s developer, Gabe Newell, the founder of Valve Software, and planted a spying program.

The delay is bad news for VU Games, which suffered a 29 percent fall in revenue and an operating loss of 52 million euros in 2003’s first half and was betting on swift holiday sales.

This is the second time the game’s release has been postponed.

Last month, VU games postponed the release of "Half-Life II" from September 30 to "an unspecified holiday release."

The game was keenly awaited after last May’s games industry trade show, E3. Critics previewing it said it brought a new level of realism to characters and the virtual world in which they move.

The original "Half-Life," released in 1998, is still popular among PC gamers, and a modified version called "Counter-Strike" is widely used in gaming competitions.

"Half-Life II" stars Gordon Freeman, a scientist battling aliens from the planet Xen in a mysterious European locale known only as City 17.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Anti-Spam Bills Losing Time

One of silicon valley’s key voices in Congress, Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., said last week that lawmakers have reached a logjam on several technology-related legislative initiatives, including spam, digital rights and, to some extent, database protection. With just a few weeks left before members plan to return home, Congress is preoccupied with spending bills.

Unwanted e-mail, a hot-button issue on Capitol Hill all year long, has led lawmakers to an impasse. "We’re stuck in the Commerce Committee in spam," Lofgren said. "Nobody’s talking to anybody."

Speaking to a small audience of IT industry representatives here, Lofgren said the majority of the committee has signed on to the Anti-Spam Act of 2003, sponsored by Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M., but the committee chairman, Rep. Billy Tauzin, R-La., doesn’t support it.

"None of us knows what would work on this tremendous problem we have," Lofgren said.

Lofgren's own anti-spam bill, the Reduce Spam Act of 2003, would require marketers to label commercial e-mail and include a valid return address, allow receivers to opt out of receiving further messages, and create a bounty for the first person to identify someone who violates the law. However, now Lofgren is considering other novel approaches such as focusing legislation on advertisers, she said.

Digital copyright protection, an increasingly controversial issue in light of the recording industry's litigation efforts against those who download music, has also brought lawmakers to an impasse, Lofgren told the audience gathered for the Computer & Communications Industry Association's annual Washington caucus.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, which authorized copyright holders to subpoena ISPs for the identity of alleged infringers, has been misinterpreted, Lofgren said. It was not the intent of the act to include non-infringing use of copyrighted material, and copyright holders should not be allowed to control the way consumers use the content they buy legally, she said.

In March, Lofgren introduced the BALANCE (Benefit Authors without Limiting Advancement or Net Consumer Expectations) Act, which would permit lawful consumers of digital material to reproduce or store that material for archival purposes or to perform or display it in a nonpublic place.

Rep. Rick Boucher, R-Va., is sponsoring a similar bill, the Digital Media Consumer Rights Act, and although Lofgren and Boucher have cosponsored each other's measure, the legislation is unlikely to go anywhere this year.

"I think we've gridlocked ourselves," Lofgren said, adding that gridlock on the matter of digital rights management may be OK at the moment.

A litigation bonanza for copyright holders will only make the situation worse, Lofgren said. She said she believes there will be new efforts to download content without being identified.

"Now we're going to end up with an anonymized system," Lofgren said. "It will be completely impossible for [content creators] to deal with it."

Momentum to pass the database protection bill, known as the Database and Collections of Information Misappropriation Act of 2003, has also slowed, Lofgren said, adding that she is skeptical such legislation can withstand judicial review.

"People are now realizing that there's a constitutional problem here," Lofgren said. "The multiple efforts to try and create a property right out of something that cannot be protected is an interesting thing to watch. I don't think it can be done."

In the Senate, lawmakers are working hard for passage of anti-spam legislation, but with a targeted adjournment at the end of the month, few are optimistic it will be done this year. The Senate Judiciary Committee approved a measure last week that would create jail time and high fines for hijacking a computer for the purpose of sending spam. The bill is the second Senate anti-spam measure to clear committee.

UK Lawmakers Call for International Anti-Spam Laws

A trio of British lawmakers urged their counterparts in the United States and Australia on Monday to adopt tough anti-spam laws modeled after recent European legislation to stop the global flow of bulk e-mail.

Spam, the unceasing torrent of get-rich-quick and anatomy-enchancing e-mail messages, has grown into a political hot-button issue across the globe. The campaign to eradicate junk messages have attracted a united front of politicians, business officials and cyber rights advocates.

The All Party Internet Group (APIG), a contingent of British parliamentarians, released a report on Monday saying anti-spam legislation should be harmonized across the globe to criminalize the cross-border activity.

"It is essential that co-ordinated global action be taken against spam," said UK MP Derek Wyatt, chairman of the APIG. The report, which gathered input from scores of companies, individuals and trade groups, is the result of a year-long probe into the economic toll of spam in the U.K.

With spam accounting for roughly half of all e-mails sent, a crackdown has taken on a new sense of urgency. The fear is that, left unchecked, spam messages will overwhelm corporate computer servers and personal in-boxes.

But few agree on how best to tackle the problem.

European Union legislation requires all e-mail senders, whether legitimate marketers or spammers, to get the prior consent of the recipient.

This so-called "opt-in" route broadly defines spam as any e-mail that arrives without a recipient’s permission, which European politicians and business officials call an effective restraint.

But current U.S. proposals carry a more advertiser-friendly "opt-out" mechanism, which has triggered mounting criticism from Europe. Next week, a team of UK politicians will travel to Washington D.C. to take their message to U.S. lawmakers.

Anti-spam proposals in Australia, one of the handful of countries working on such a law, would carry "opt-in" specifications.

Last month, the United Kingdom and Italy were the first EU member states to pass anti-spam laws. But industry observers have already questioned the effectiveness of such laws, noting that the biggest offenders are based in the United States, Asia and the Caribbean.

"What happens when you have spammers coming from the Cayman Islands? Who are you going to sue? They don’t have any laws," said Alyn Hockey, product director for ClearSwift, a UK-based firm that specializes in anti-spam software for corporations.

The UK law in particular has drawn criticism for the light penalties it would impose on spammers and the fact that it doesn’t offer protection to corporate e-mail recipients.

In Britain, convicted junk mail peddlers face a 5,000 pound ($8,314) fine

if found guilty in a magistrates court. The fine from a jury trial would be unlimited.

The report suggested Britain's Department of Trade and Industry extend the anti-spam law, which goes into effect in December, to corporate victims and ensure that the enforcement body, the Information Commissioner, has the power to convict suspects.

Disgruntled Phillies Fan Arrested for E-Mail Spams

Federal officers arrested a disgruntled Philadelphia Phillies baseball fan in California on charges of hacking into computers and sending thousands of spam e-mails to sports writers at two Philadelphia newspapers, officials said.

Allan Eric Carlson, 39, was arrested on Tuesday at his home in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale and charged with hacking, spoofing return addresses, launching spam attacks and identity theft for using fake e-mail addresses, according to the U.S. Attorney's office in Philadelphia.

Carlson was arrested by the agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Despite a competitive season, the Phillies failed to win a spot in Major League Baseball's championship playoffs.

The spam messages were critical of Phillies management and the media including one that had a subject line reading, "Corrupt Philly Media Keeps Phils in Cellar," according to the indictment.

Carlson used fake return addresses, belonging to sports reporters at the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia Daily News, the indictment said.

Because many of the e-mail addresses the spam was sent to were bad, they bounced back to the reporters' e-mail accounts, crippling the servers where they were stored, according to the indictment.

EarthLink Adds Spyware Protection

Internet service provider EarthLink said Wednesday that it is offering customers free software to protect them from so-called spyware programs.

The Atlanta-based company is adding a program called Spyware Blocker to its TotalAccess package of software programs and tools, which EarthLink subscribers can download for free from the company's Web site.

Spyware is a generic term that describes a variety of different software applications that snoop on an Internet user's activities. Some legal programs that monitor Web surfing behavior or display pop-up ads might be considered spyware.

However, spyware is often installed and run without the user's knowledge and can do everything from capturing and secretly distributing the information typed on a computer keyboard to giving a remote attacker total access to a Internet-connected computer, Richard Smith, an independent security consultant based in Boston, said in a recent interview.

The programs have become a more common presence on users' computers and are often bundled with peer-to-peer file-sharing software like Kazaa, or installed on the sly in "drive-by downloads" when users visit a Web site set up to distribute the programs, Smith said.

Spyware Blocker can detect up to 1500 different types of spyware programs, according to EarthLink. Users can scan their computer hard drives for spyware programs. Once Spyware Blocker locates a suspicious program, it will explain what the program does and give users the ability to shut down that application or allow it to continue operating.

An alert function notifies users when a spyware application is running on their system, the company said.

The new product is intended to give EarthLink customers peace of mind and to help fight a security threat often overlooked by antivirus and firewall technology, the company said.

The announcement is just the latest from EarthLink, which in recent months has introduced new software tools and filed lawsuits to combat a host of online ill including unsolicited commercial e-mail (spam), identity theft, and pop-up advertisements.

Microsoft Suit Could Set Precedent for Bad Software

A Los Angeles filmmaker's lawsuit targeting Microsoft's vulnerable software could signal a sea change for the software industry if judges and jurors decide that vendors should be legally responsible for damages caused by flaws in their products.

Alleging that "Microsoft's virtual monopoly has created a global security risk" and that its "integration and complexity promotes vulnerability," the court papers call for more adequate and effective notification of security vulnerabilities and injunctive relief to prevent the violation of laws and deceptive trade practices.

"We think it's fundamentally unfair for a company to so dominate the marketplace that consumers don't have an option and yet say it's not going to be responsible or provide warranties if you have a problem," says Dana Taschner, attorney for plaintiff Marcy Levitas Hamilton.

The litigation says the vast majority of successful Internet attacks are attributable to major vulnerabilities in Microsoft's operating system software, which is used by more than 90% of computer users.

"They have a number of pretty good legal arguments," says Stewart Baker, technology department head at legal firm Steptoe Johnson. "The risk that they face is that the climate will turn against them."

Baker compares the litigation to that faced by the tobacco industry. He says tobacco companies won cases for 20 or 30 years because the climate of opinion at the time was that people knew tobacco was bad for them prior to using it. Over time, opinion changed and juries came into cases predisposed to believe that tobacco companies deserved to pay a big chunk of the damage the product did.

"The risk here is that if security problems get worse and worse, juries and judges will be less willing to listen to arguments from software companies and more and more inclined to make them pay for the problems everyone is encountering," says Baker. "It’s not a straight legal analysis, it’s the standing of the company in the public eye."

Though the litigation targets only Microsoft, legal experts say the case may impact vendors across the industry.

"I think it sends a wake-up call to other vendors who maybe aren’t quite as quick in sending advisories and providing patches as Microsoft," Michael Overly, a partner in the IT group at Foley Lardner, says in regard to notification provisions in California Senate Bill 1386.

Baker says the litigation will face at least a few significant obstacles. Chief among them, a legal disclaimer in the end-user license agreement. He also notes that proving legal liability for failing to prevent bad acts by someone else is far more difficult to prove than liability for an injury caused by negligence.

Intuit Apologizes to Customers Over TurboTax

Hoping to signal a return to its customer-friendly roots, Intuit Inc. on Thursday apologized to its TurboTax customers who were angered when the company installed anti-piracy technology on the popular tax-preparation software for the 2002 tax year.

"I want to personally apologize for any frustration you may have experienced due to the restrictions that came with our use of anti-piracy technology," Tom Allanson, general manager of TurboTax, said in an open letter to customers. The letter was published in advertisements in the Wall Street Journal and USA Today, as well as on the company’s turbotax.com Web site.

"In response to feedback from our customers, I want you to know that we’re making an important change to TurboTax software and have removed activation technology," Allanson said, adding that the new TurboTax for the 2003 tax year can be used fully on multiple computers.

While some customers were angered by Intuit’s move to curb rampant, unauthorized sharing TurboTax, most complaints arose due to the technology’s tying the software to a single computer - which meant people couldn’t do such things as prepare returns at home and print them at work, Barrington Research analyst Eric Wanger said.

TurboTax sales rose more than 25 percent year-over-year in its fiscal third quarter ended in April amid the customer flap, while still missing internal targets.

P-to-P Companies Look to Go Legal

Under attack from the U.S. entertainment industry and some members of the U.S. Congress, the largest peer-to-peer software vendors are forging ahead with business plans that some critics find ironic: the distribution of

music and content licensed from the very industry that calls them "outlaws."

At a kickoff event September 29, the six members of the newly formed P2P United lobbying group pushed for Congress to legalize the sharing of music through P-to-P software by setting up compulsory licensing that would require the entertainment industry to make its content available on P-to-P networks for a price. Congress needs to "hold a gun to the head" of the entertainment industry, Wayne Rosso, president of Grokster, said in an interview.

Most P-to-P vendors agree that the unauthorized trading of copyright material has to stop, Rosso said. "I think you'll find that most of us feel the future for us is in original content," he added. "There are two ways to stop piracy online: nuclear holocaust and licensing the content. Obviously, the RIAA has opted for nuclear holocaust."

Meanwhile, Sharman Networks, owner of the popular Kazaa Media Desktop P-to-P package, wants to persuade companies in the music and movie industries to voluntarily license content to them. Sharman Networks is pushing ahead with this business plan even as it sues those industries for what the company calls an industry-wide "conspiracy" to shut Kazaa out of the market of distributing licensed content.

P-to-P vendors say it's almost inevitable that the entertainment industry will embrace P-to-P as a distribution model. They argue that P-to-P, with most digital content residing on users' hard drives, is a more cost-effective and efficient model of distributing digital content than maintaining a large array of central servers. They also talk up P-to-P's "viral" marketing benefits, where users trust recommendations from other users more than products hyped by large companies.

The goal of Sharman Networks and its partner Altnet is to become the premier distributor of licensed - that is, authorized - digital entertainment, said Alan Morris, Sharman's executive vice president. P-to-P companies including the privately held Sharman and Grokster feature authorized downloads of some video games and music from some independent artists or labels, and they also carry advertising, through banner ads or pop-ups that users must endure if they don't want to pay for ad-free versions of the P-to-P software.

"We want to work with them," Morris said of his current opponents in the entertainment industry. "[Licensed content] is not a sideline for us. I don't need the hassle of fighting lawsuits...just to make a few bucks on some advertising."

Critics of the current crop of P-to-P vendors say there's little chance that the entertainment industry will suddenly turn an about-face and start working with the vendors it has been trying to sue into submission. Compulsory licensing, which P2P United members champion as an approach that would allow artists to be paid for files traded, hasn't been part of the extensive P-to-P debate in Congress this year, although hearings on the issue have been held in past years.

"The odds that the major studios, the major record labels are ever going to want to do business with somebody who's tried to bludgeon them into going along is pretty low," said Evan R. Cox, a copyright specialist and partner with the San Francisco office of the Covington & Burling law firm. "The guys who went into this [P-to-P business] knowing how it was going to be used at the onset are never going to be viewed as trusted business

partners by the establishment."

The entertainment industry might be willing to work with a new P-to-P service that pledges not to trade unauthorized music from the onset, added Cox, who filed a brief for the Business Software Alliance siding with the RIAA in its ongoing lawsuit against several P-to-P vendors.

A spokesperson for the RIAA declined to comment on P-to-P business plans, but pointed to a recent statement from RIAA Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Mitch Bainwol, urging P-to-P companies to "finally act like responsible corporate citizens" by warning users about illegal file sharing and filtering copyright content off their networks. P-to-P vendors "deliberately induce people to break the law," Bainwol said in his September 30 statement, and in a hearing in early September, RIAA President Cary Sherman accused P-to-P services of facilitating the trade of child pornography and exposing their users to security problems.

The talk coming from the Motion Picture Association of America has taken an even more no-compromise tone than the RIAA’s statements. "Kazaa, Gnutella, Morpheus, and the rest of them are outlaw sites," Jack Valenti, president and chief executive officer of the MPAA, said in a congressional hearing September 30. "They do nothing but offer illegal music, movies, and the most sordid pornography that your mind can ever comprehend."

P-to-P vendors fired back after a Senate hearing in late September on child pornography available on P-to-P services. They argued that P-to-P services distribute a small percentage of the child pornography available on the Internet.

"To portray us, P-to-P developers, as being purveyors of child smut is insane," said Michael Weiss, chief executive officer of Morpheus parent company StreamCast Networks. "Take a look at their tactics, about how they market sexually and violently explicit music and music videos specifically to underage kids," he said of the entertainment industry.

In Congress this year, the question of whether P-to-P services have a legitimate business model has lurked in the background of debates on the dangers of using P-to-P software and the subpoena process that allows copyright owners to find out the names and addresses of suspected downloaders without a judge’s review.

Since March, Congress has hosted a series of hearings on possible dangers of P-to-P file trading, from users sharing their hard drives to potential connections between piracy and terrorism to the amount of child pornography traded between P-to-P users.

In early September, the RIAA announced lawsuits against 261 P-to-P users, accusing them each of uploading hundreds of songs to other P-to-P users. And in June, the chairman of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, Utah Republican Orrin Hatch, advocated that unauthorized downloaders of copyright songs have their computers destroyed, although he later backed away from that remark.

Even senators questioning the RIAA’s tactics in its series of lawsuits against file traders have made it clear that they believe the unauthorized trading of copyright files is illegal. It’s in this environment that the members of P2P United have begun pushing compulsory licensing, by saying it’s an idea that needs to be debated instead of shouted down by music and movie companies.

The owners of six P-to-P software packages - Grokster, Morpheus, Lime Wire, BearShare, Blubster, and eDonkey 2000 - officially launched their lobbying group in September, and they acknowledge that selling compulsory licensing to Congress may be an uphill battle.

"It’s about time that congressional members hear the other side of the story," Weiss said. "We, as a P-to-P industry, have allowed the recording industry to set the agenda, and it’s time for that to change."

If the entertainment industry and P-to-P vendors can’t come to an agreement, Congress needs to step in, Weiss added. "It’s time to stop listening to the lobbyists of the recording industry, and start listening more to the will of the 63 million Americans that use file-sharing software," he said. "It’s time to find solutions to get artists paid, to keep file sharing legal and to not criminalize 63 million Americans."

P2P United’s members argue that compulsory licensing would work much in the same way that radio stations and nightclubs with jukeboxes pay licensing fees to music companies, although radio licenses are voluntary on the part of the recording industry.

A compulsory license would likely be passed on to music downloaders or Internet users, in the form of a small tax on blank CDs or on Internet service. P2P United and the Electronic Frontier Foundation argue that compulsory licenses have a history dating back to the early 1900s and the player piano, and a congressional mandate would guarantee both payment for artists and a business plan for P-to-P vendors.

The RIAA has opposed compulsory licensing, saying an ’if you can’t beat ’em, join ’em’ approach is the wrong way to go. "Compulsory licensing schemes...are simply a way of substituting government regulation for the marketplace," the RIAA said in a position paper released in September. "When was the last time that government pricing and regulation worked better than the free market? Compulsory licensing proposals are a crude, inflexible instrument that can’t keep pace with the dynamic, rapidly evolving Internet. Only the marketplace can do that."

Others suggest Congress may have to step into the war between the entertainment industry and P-to-P vendors. Some kind of compulsory license may not happen this year or next, but Thomas E. Moore III, a partner in the Palo Alto, California, office of the intellectual property law firm Tomlinson Zisko, said it seems unlikely that the technological and legal arms race between the two sides will stop without congressional intervention.

"I would like to see a technological answer," Moore said. "But I think at some point Congress almost has to step in. You’ve got an enormous rebellion on your hands among millions of downloaders across the United States, and they’re people you do not really want to criminalize."

Kazaa distributor Sharman Networks isn’t part of P2P United, and one of the differences is the view on compulsory licenses. Sharman Networks, through its partner Altnet, wants to license digital content and distribute it with digital rights management-enabled click-wrap licenses, with an e-commerce-style payment mechanism included with files.

Instead, Sharman Networks has been trying to encourage a dialog among Internet service providers, copyright holders, and P-to-P vendors through its trade group, the Distributed Computing Industry Association. Sharman Networks sees compulsory licensing as one tool that could be used by P-to-P

services, although it "freaks out" the RIAA, Morris said.

Sharman Networks has signed licensing deals with entertainment companies outside the United States, including those in India and the UK, and will continue to do so even if the U.S. entertainment industry refuses to play along, Morris said.

If the U.S. entertainment industry wins in Congress and the courts, "then we pack up and go home," Morris said. But that scenario may end up being the recording industry's "worst nightmare," he said, because other P-to-P services not interested in working with the RIAA will spring up and flourish.

"There are hacked versions of Kazaa Media Desktop out there," Morris said, predicting what could happen. "The code goes wild...so instead of there being 60 million-plus users worldwide served by what we like to think are very responsible companies trying to do the right thing, the whole thing fragments and goes underground."

New Pay Version of Napster Set for Debut

The Napster name, once synonymous with the digital song-swapping bazaar that incensed the recording industry, revives Thursday as an Internet music store that will go head to head with such competitors as Apple and MusicMatch.

Santa Clara-based Roxio Inc., which bought the rights to the Napster name for about $5 million, has shelved its former online music service, pressplay, and plans to move subscribers to a beta, or working version, of Napster 2.0 beginning Thursday.

Napster 2.0 will be available to the general public within a month, according to sources familiar with the plans.

Roxio is betting the Napster brand will help set its service apart from a bevy of other digital music retailers that have launched since Apple Computer Inc. introduced its iTunes Music Store in April.

Last week, MusicMatch Inc. launched a Web site that sells song and album downloads and boasts record label licensing agreements that offered the fewest copying restrictions yet outside of iTunes.

Others, including Buy.com's BuyMusic.com, RealNetworks's Rhapsody, MusicNow and MusicNet, are also vying for a piece of the market.

The new Napster will also have to contend with iTunes, which has sold more than 10 million songs and is expected to be available on the Windows platform by year's end.

"The space has become crowded because there's a recognition of this is going to be a very substantial business," Chris Gorog, Roxio's chairman and chief executive, told The Associated Press. "It validates Roxio's strategy to enter this business."

The music industry has seen CD sales plummet over the last three years as illegal music file-sharing exploded, beginning with the original Napster, which was forced to shut down in 2001 after a protracted legal battle with

recording companies.

Meanwhile, file-sharing over the most popular peer-to-peer networks has declined in recent weeks, coinciding with a lawsuit campaign launched against downloaders by the recording industry.

Traffic on Kazaa’s network, the most popular, dropped 41 percent between the last week of June and mid-September, according to Nielsen NetRatings, which monitors Internet usage.

At the same time, online music sales are expected to grow from 1 percent of the total music market to 12 percent in 2008, generating about $1.5 billion in sales, according to Jupiter Research.

To differentiate itself from the growing pack of digital music purveyors, Napster 2.0 will offer both individual song and album downloads as well as a subscription service. Pressplay, which went off-line Tuesday, only offered access to songs for a monthly fee.

Napster 2.0 will launch with more than a half-million songs, from all the major labels.

The company also hopes users will buy a new Samsung portable digital music player co-designed by Napster to work its program.

Any digital music device that plays Windows Media Audio files can also be used, however.

Gorog declined to offer details Wednesday about Napster 2.0’s pricing and any usage restrictions on downloaded music.

He has said the prices would not be out of line with what other services charge, which is about $1 per song and about $10 for full albums or monthly subscription.

Gorog did say that while the service will incorporate some usage restrictions, he believes most users won’t notice them.

"Ninety-nine percent or more of our Napster users will never bump their heads against any usage rules," Gorog said. "They’re going to be in an environment where everything costs the same, where every song that they select they can burn to a CD or offload to their device, they can do it multiple times and they won’t even know what the usage rules are because they are so flexible."

AOL Sticks With Google

Not to be left behind in the recent search surge, America Online said Tuesday that it has expanded its agreement with Google and shored up its own AOL Search capabilities with new query options and navigation tools.

AOL said that it will have increased access to Google’s index and sponsored links as part of a new multi-year agreement, the details of which were not revealed.

The company’s expanded agreement with Google spells good news for the search leader, according to Danny Sullivan, editor of editor of

SearchEngineWatch.com, because it shows that AOL sees the company as a partner rather than a potential rival.

"AOL seems largely comfortable with outsourcing whereas MSN wants to own the technology," Sullivan said.

Microsoft's MSN service has recently moved to update its search technologies and just Monday ended its agreement with search listing provider LookSmart.

AOL spokesperson David Theis affirmed his company's outsourcing strategy. "There is an industry leader that people value and enjoy so we are offering our users that technology, as well our own," Theis said.

In addition to its alliance with Google, AOL said that it has introduced new search capabilities within its AOL 9.0 Optimized service. The new features include a "Smart" box search tool that automatically presents relevant choices when a user types in a search query in the quickstart toolbar field, and navigation tabs that provide quick access to Web pages, images, and groups.

The Dulles, Virginia, Internet service provider has also bolstered its local search features, providing query results according to user zip codes.

AOL's search improvements reflect a growing interest among Internet players to get in on the search market, which has proven a successful enterprise for Google and others with its ability to snag both paid search revenue and user popularity.

While Sullivan said that none of the AOL Search updates are a giant step in search capabilities, he added that they would probably be useful to AOL members.

AOL plans to continue to make moves in the search market, according to Theis, as its one of the hottest trends currently happening online.

"We want to show our members that we are keeping up," Theis said.

Apple's Panther: A Jaguar on Steroids

With the release of its new Mac OS X (version 10.3), dubbed "Panther," Apple once again is hoping to break into the corporate market. Analysts say Panther looks great, but they still wonder why the company has not established a clearer marketing strategy.

AMD's 64-bit chip hoopla has watered down some of the excitement around Apple's own 64-bit innovation. But the early consensus is that the new G5 machines are blazing. Now, with the arrival of Panther - Apple's latest OS X - some users and testers are forecasting a sea change in computing.

"We're getting the attention of lots of alpha-geeks who really like it," Brian Croll, Senior director for system-software product marketing at Apple, told NewsFactor. "Check out Slashdot.com - you see a huge amount of discussion about our software amongst the tech crowd."

The most prominent improved feature in Mac OS X Panther (US$129) is a redesigned finder that makes file searching up to six-times faster,

according to Apple, than its predecessor, Jaguar (version 10.2). The new finder also allows browsing of the network for Mac, Windows and Unix file servers.

Yankee Group analyst Laura DiDio loves the new features. But, she told NewsFactor, "if Apple is to ever do more than make machines for a niche market, it has to start turning heads in corporate IT departments."

"We're doing that," says Croll. "OS X is widely applicable because it's based on Unix. You have the ability to plug into a Windows network."

If Apple starts to win battles for company desktops, the beachhead likely will be in the server rooms of IT departments. Croll touts the firm's new Panther server software, which, he emphasizes, "is Unix-based, and makes it easy for IT people who are familiar with Linux or Unix."

The Panther server OS features a new server-admin tool to set up and manage open-source software, such as Apache or Tomcat. And it allows Windows clients to plug into the network. Panther server software ($499 for ten client computers, $999 for unlimited clients) runs on Apple's XServe rack-mount server hardware.

It has been a while since Apple has contended for a significant piece of the corporate market. DiDio does not see it getting any easier. "In order to compete for the attention of IT managers, Apple is going to have to ship something really revolutionary. And as good as I think the new Panther offerings are, I think these are evolutionary."

Apple is one of the few computer firms that regularly makes products that practically sell themselves - the iPod, for example. Trouble is, the company stands outside of the Wintel paradigm. Firms like Dell have developed extensive sales channels that Apple will have a difficult time disrupting. "It's ironic," says DiDio. "Apple is the company which pioneered the whole concept of 'ease of use,' and today they are seen as foreigners by corporate IT managers."

Apple's timing coincides with the replacement cycle that was disrupted because of the economic downturn and the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Companies have been sitting on old equipment for much longer than usual and are expected to buy when the economy turns. But will Apple be able to get a piece of the action, along with Dell, Hewlett-Packard and a host of other Wintel firms? DiDio says it is unclear. "They have not done a good job marketing their strategy for biz users," she observes. "What is it?"

But Apple, which contends that its marketing strategy is top secret, says its machines are showing up outside of the graphics studio more and more. Croll acknowledges that it is an evolutionary process but, he says, "it's happening. Some scientists are using the BLAST gene-sequencing program on a Mac." Quite evolutionary.

FTC Set To Process Protests of Sales Calls

The Federal Trade Commission said yesterday that it will begin at 6 p.m. Saturday - after a court-imposed 10-day delay - to accept complaints from people who put their phone numbers on the national anti-telemarketing registry.

"I leave it to you to decide whether it’s a coincidence that the complaint process opens at the dinner hour," Federal Trade Commission Chairman Timothy J. Muris said at a news conference to announce that the registry is "fully up and running."

An automated system will take the information, FTC officials said. Saturday evening was the earliest the agency could begin taking complaints, they added.

Muris said that at 8 a.m. today the registry will resume accepting residential numbers not already on the list.

Muris’s announcement came less than 24 hours after a U.S. Court of Appeals panel gave the agency clearance to start enforcing the list, which contains more than 52 million phone numbers, about one-third of all residential phone lines.

Enforcement of the list, including $11,000 fines for violators, was supposed to begin Oct. 1. But legal challenges by the telemarketing industry brought implementation plans to a sudden halt. A U.S. district judge blocked the agency on the grounds that the registry violated the free-speech protections of telemarketers.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit said Tuesday that the agency was likely to prove that it is in the public interest to curb unwanted telephone sales calls.

In the meantime, the Federal Communications Commission has been collecting complaints about telemarketing calls. Through yesterday afternoon, the agency had received 2,379 complaints and issued at least 19 letters of inquiries to telemarketers, the first step of an enforcement investigation.

Less than half of the 13,000 firms that have notified the FTC that they intend to purchase some portion of the list obtained it before it was shut down. Those firms "are expected to comply immediately," Muris said. Those who do not have the list have until Oct. 17 to begin complying. Telemarketers will once again be able to gain access to the list tomorrow morning, allowing them to obtain the numbers that are not to be called.

"The bottom line here is this: If you registered your phone number on the national registry before September 1, and you get a call that violates the law, file a complaint," Muris said. For people signing up after Sept. 1, it could take three months before telemarketers stop calling their homes, because the companies are required to update their call lists only every three months.

The telemarketing industry’s two major trade associations continued to urge their members to comply with the list yesterday. The Direct Marketing Association, which represents 4,700 firms that market their goods and services over the phone, reiterated its position that "it is not the proper role of government to create and implement a national do-not-call list."

In the legal arena, "we are not completely out of the woods," said FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell, who joined Muris at the news conference. But, he said, "I refuse to believe that the Constitution of the United States shuts down the ability of consumers to protect the sanctity of their homes."

The three-judge appeals panel set up an expedited schedule for a hearing on the constitutional issues, moving up to next month oral arguments that

were initially scheduled for January. That hearing will consolidate three federal lawsuits so all issues can be resolved through a single court decision.

Bubble Bursts for E-Books

At the height of the Internet boom, e-books were hailed as the shining new tomorrow for publishers and paper books were heading for the scrap heap.

But the bubble has burst and electronic books are still the poor relation to the printed word with consumers preferring to turn the pages themselves when they curl up by the fire with a good book.

"The limitless euphoria of the beginning belongs to the past," said Arnoud de Kemp, a leading electronic publisher with the science and business media firm Springer.

Three years after the e-book frenzy reached its peak, publishers in Frankfurt for the world’s biggest book fair of the year were in a much more realistic frame of mind.

Last month, top U.S. bookseller Barnes & Noble Inc announced it was halting e-book sales. "We did not see sales take off as we and many others had anticipated," a spokesman said.

Targets have been sharply lowered and now publishers look on e-books as a much smaller market which does still, admittedly from a very low starting point, see steady growth.

"Expectations were widely overblown at the time of the Internet bubble," said British publisher Helen Fraser, managing director at Penguin.

"But there is a small market for them and it may grow as different reading devices appear on the market. Sales do go up month by month," she told Reuters.

She said if Penguin sold 40,000 copies of a printed book, it would typically shift 4,000 audio books of the same title and 400 e-books.

In the technological battle to find the perfect way to read electronic books on your palm-top or personal computer, competing formats have put the consumer off.

David Steinberg, president of corporate strategy and international in New York with HarperCollins, said: "There was a format war. They compete and are not compatible. That creates resistance."

"Three years ago, there was a huge amount of hype but we did not get caught up in it. We steered away from digitizing all our works and dumping them into cyberspace," he told Reuters.

He said e-books, still a tiny part of the overall business, have a "30 percent plus" annual growth rate with HarperCollins putting out the complete works of thriller writer Agatha Christie electronically.

But the reader’s love affair with the printed word is far from over because, as Chris Barnard, technology analyst at IDC consultancy,

concluded, "One problem is that e-books are up against a very established technology, namely books. And most people are very happy with that technology."

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